

#25

THE POCKET ARMENIAN

DECEMBER
20, 1975

(1) THE CANADIAN POSTAL STRIKE IS OVER. All games will resume play. Positions are listed on pages at the back, so people can get their bearings again, as it were. The elaborate procedures talked about last issue will not be effected. Things will return to normal.

(2) DEADLINE FOR ALL GAMES IS 9 P.M., Thursday, January 8, 1975.

(3) THE GAMESMASTERS:

Scott Rosenberg, 182-31 Radnor Rd, Jamaica NY 11432 212-969-3555 1974GU 1973FC
Matthew Diller, 85-07 Avon Street, Jamaica NY 11432 212-AX7-8446 1974FM 11975B AGCv
David Barlow, 107 Gladwin Avenue, Leonia NJ 07605 201-947-8840 1974GH 1974ID

(4) REBUS SIC STANTIBUS (Which, for those of you illiterati who don't know Latin means "things as they stand") is the newest 'zine to pop into the mails, and one of the best. It is professionally mimeoed (looks as good as, and maybe better than, this) with an illustrated cover. It is published by something called the "New England Society pf Cynics," but the Diplomacy man involved is none other than Drew McGee, famed winner of the Wintercon III tourney. In the first issue is printed a variant, Grand Tournament Diplomacy, which is a souped up version of "Inverse Diplomacy," although I assume it was developed independently. Each supply center has a commander; each country's commanders can elect Kings; there can be coups; and so forth. It looks very good. REBUS will print one game of this variant and four regular Dippy. Players in the variant can sub for \$2.50 a year (12 issues, I guess) and play in other games free. Regular players must sub at \$3.00. It's slightly unclear but I think the first game is free, and additional ones are \$1.00. Write to the New England Society of X Cynics (actually it's Drew McGee) at 65 Winter Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10301.

THE POCKET ARMENIAN
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THE POCKET ARMENIAN is a journal of postal Diplomacy and some other oddities. Subs are 8/\$2, 9/\$2 to IDA members. Published tri-weekly and used to run normally 12 pages--but who knows? (see page two). There are no game openings. We welcome (nay, PLEAD FOR) contributions, paying 4 free issues for more than a page and 2 for a page or less. Back issues are available at reasonable rates; inquire for details. Permissions is granted for anyone to reprint anything from within as long as (1) credit is given; (2) a copy sent to us; and (3) if it is not by one of the editors, please obtain the permission of the author. TPA is a division of CHOAM publications, which is a fictitious corporate entity viciously lifted from Frank Herbert's DUNE, and exists solely in the mad mind of its creator, Scott Rosenberg, who pulls it out of his closet on rainy days when he has nothing to do and laughs at it.

I HAVE RUN OUT OF CORFLU!!!

STABBING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

By Scott Rosenberg

Flipping through the pages of any recent 'zine, you'll see pages of discussions on ratings, strategy & tactics, hobby politics, feuds and arguments. What is tacitly assumed, and never really mentioned, is that we are all supposed to be getting some fun out of this morass; it is, after all, a hobby, and one pursues a hobby for fun.

So how do people get their kicks from Diplomacy? The best place to look would be the game itself, raison d'etre for all this other self-important nonsense.

The most common fun-inducing action in the game is quite obviously the stab-in-the-back, or "stab" as we so affectionately know it. Stabs have been made in so many different ways, in so many different places, by and to so many different people that even to break the surface of the types of stabs would require other articles. But, as the sayings go, the stab is many different things to many different people, and one man's stab is another's legitimate attack.

From my observations of people in various stages of the Diplomacy disease I have reached the conclusion that novices have more fun. I have been stabbed by more first-timers than any other group--and theirs are most often the ones that are done only for fun, without real strategic reason. Many wargamers are attracted to Diplomacy for no other reason than this thrill that is unobtainable in their chosen field of gaming. These are the players who will stab for the sake of stabbing, anyone and anything. I once heard such a player say that it's no fun to eliminate someone because then you can't stab him again!

As players become more experienced, they develop a bit more discretion and will usually only stab to gain something. This, ipso facto, removes some of the fun. It is in this period that the "coalition players" enter stage left, hiss the villain, and so on.

Finally, after years of playing add inevitable boredom to the traditional patterns of play, the "character stabbers" enter--many, if not most, of the NY crowd fall into this group. Basically, a character stabber will not stab for no reason, but will stab only for fun--whether it helps his position or not is irrelevant. This sort of playing style requires thorough familiarity among all the players in the game--the character stabber will be left in the cold in a game with strangers. The fun comes in when you get to stab the same guy four times in the same game--after doing the same thing in the last four games, Or stabbing someone and taking five centers in one season--something I have never done but have had the misfortune to be subjected to. Or stabbing someone in eight games simultaneously. Or stabbing all the other players in the game in the same season. Or personal-joke stabs. The list continues endlessly.

This is the sort of stabbing that you could witness just about at any of the meetings at the House of Games on 72nd street. Poor Gene Prosnitz is the real victim of multiple stabs in the same game. The "middle group"--serious--players who show up there just can't seem to understand why we "ruin" their games with out jokes. Because we don't react exactly according to the dictates of good strategy & tactics in a particular situation, the game doesn't go as expected, and the "middle group" people get disgusted.

But all that means is that we have all the fun!

I am making an urgent plea: PLEASE WRITE SOMETHING. A few people complained that last issue was only eight pages; they'll complain again about this one. I just don't have the time any more to generate the material--so if you don't want to see the 8-pages become permanent, please write articles, press, letters, humor, anything!

V E R H A N D E L N -- The Diplomacy Rating Service

By Lew Pulsipher

Misinformation and even violent denunciation of the Diplomacy Rating Service (DRS) has appeared in the Diplomacy press. DRS has tried to correct some misconceptions in letters to editors, but much of this isn't reaching print. I intend to clarify the DRS purpose as I understand it from their letters, to comment on the success they ~~have~~ are likely to meet with present methods, and to examine the actual rating system DRS used.

Most of the printed comment about DRS has mentioned postal rating, condemning the \$1 per game cost, without recognizing that DRS is primarily a FTF rating organization. In fact, DRS recently withdrew its original offer to rate postal games. \$1 per postal game would be prohibitive compared to the present free rating by so many ratingsmasters; but face-to-face play presents problems not encountered by the postal ratingsmaster, and some per-game cost is justifiable. The FTF rater must obtain records of the games from individual GMs; there is no EVERYTHING to collect data in one easy publication. The Boardman Number Custodian, who compiles EVERYTHING, is subsidized by IDA so that he can better afford to collect postal data. ((Indeed, in the most recent EVERYTHING, John Weswig says that without IDA's and GRI's help, there would probably have been no EVERYTHING.)) In the same way the \$1 per game (or 40¢ if discount offers are used) subsidized the collection and publication of data for FTF games. In addition, the full account of each postal game is printed as the game progresses, so there are few worries about persons resorting to non-competitive means of raising their ratings (But see Rod Walkers' article in Diplomacy World II/3 for charges of postal shenanigans). In postal play there are also many people who find DIPLOMACY enjoyable for non-competitive reasons. These people tend to foul up results as a measure of skill. The per-game charge by DRS may help turn away non-competitive players while giving GMs a greater sense of responsibility than if no money were involved. ((Damn that stupid margin!)) But DRS accepts the likelihood that the system will be abused by those who become too oeg-involved, just as the USCF chess rating is abused. Finally, the DRS apparently expects many of the rated games to be in tournaments, where the players will be asked to pay an entry fee anyway, and the extra money for the rating will not seem significant.

(My own suggestion for a FTF rating (see NABPS #2 Results) included a one-per-year fee per player, with several rules designed to prevent unfair manipulation of the rating. One which I think the DRS should adopt is a limitation on the number of games that may be rated per year in which three or more players are the same. This would help prevent "padding," and might serve the purpose of the "factor" (see below) without decreasing the validity of the rating.)

An important thing to notice, though it was not clear at first, is that DRS is interested first in promoting FTF Diplomacy, not in rating FTF playing skill. Consequently they use a cumulative point system rather than an evaluation system--apparently similar to using the Calhamer Point Count rather than the Averaged CPC. This means that persistent players will score higher than occasional players, no matter how good the latter are. In addition, DRS has introduced a "factor" into its rating. This is a multiplier that will increase all ratings in a game in accordance with the number of players who have played FTF for ratings under the presiding GM. Players in a game under someone new in DRS have their results multiplied by 1.00; under a GM who is experienced the multiplier is increased by .01 per person who has played under that GM. The "factor" is designed to encourage GMs to introduce more players to FTF Diplomacy. While one could argue that results of play are more likely to be accurate reflections of skill when more persons are in the playing pool, certainly the difference is much less than given in the DRS factor. I think that once people become aware of this "factor" they will tend to discount DRS ratings

(continued on page four)

Verhandeln (Continued)

(assuming they think much of ratings to begin with); whether the factor will be effective in its intended purpose I greatly doubt.

Another serious problem with the DRS rating system is that it is apparently perpetual, like every postal system. That is, no matter how many years ago you played a game, it will count. ((Doesn't ODD include a time factor?)) This is a great discouragement to beginning players, who are the people DRS wants to attract. For example, Edi Birsan's average wins per game is not exceptional ((though it is good)), but he has played so many games that he is way ahead in the total Calhamer Point Count. No matter how good a new player is, he must play fifty games at a time in order to have any hope of catching Birsan within a few years--Ron Kelly is making such an effort at present ((but with more like 90 games!)). In the same way, if the DRS system is cumulative--and right now they say it is--it will be impossible for a new player to attain a good rating unless he is tenacious; to paraphrase the old saw, he'll need a telescope to look up to a middling rating when he starts out. Even if an averaging system is used (Averaged Calhamer Point Count, e.g.), there is the problem of the player who does very well in his first few games and then perpetually rests at the top of the ratings on the basis of these few old games. A much more satisfactory method is to begin the ratings anew every year or nine months (for FTF); or throw out older games, say games a year old, in increments of two or three months, for FTF, and games three years old, with increments of one year, for postal ratings. The new player will not have to wait long before he can compete with old-timers on the same level. Without this change, the new player will look through his telescope and decide that it will cost more effort than he can afford to build a moonship--and he won't be attracted by ratings in the least.

People are only attracted to ratings when they are a valid representation of skill, if they are attracted at all, and when they have a chance of becoming highly rated in the foreseeable future. FTF ratings are needed to promote FTF play, and to give us (the hobby) something to offer FTF players as postal play becomes too expensive for many people, but I think the present DRS system does not fill the need.

The final section on the actual rating numbers is simple. So far as I know, no one has compared the DRS system with other numerical systems. Naturally I cannot include the "factor"; just remember that it will cause values to vary considerably from game to game for similar finishes. The DRS system assigns point values to each place, from 7.00 to .01, with points for draws determined by the value of mid-points. Thus a 3-way draw is equal to second place, 5-way draw to third place, and so forth. Separate values are included for draws that don't fall conveniently (a "1-2" place for a 2-way draw, "2-3" for a 4-way draw, etc.). I have converted several rating systems to a scale with a win equaling 100. "CPC/rules" is the Calhamer Point Count, which is also the interpretation usually accepted by those who follow the rulebook. "DRS" is the Diplomacy Rating Serve system. "NADPS" is the value assigned the various outcomes by the more than 150 respondents to the North American Diplomacy Players' Survey #2. "Brob" is the Brobdingnag Rating System, one of the oldest. Note that the Brob system treats draws in the same way that the DRS system does, although actual values are different. Other rating systems cannot be converted for this kind of comparison.

(continued next page)

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So far, no lawsuits--or even responses--to last issue's stuff. Oh well--I'm waiting, Kovalcik. By the way, Rich, where are those accusations from Walker that I used material intended for the IDA Handbook in TPA? Huh?

The Exponent has become a true dud. My game has been delayed for something like 3 months.

	CPC/rules*	DRS	NADPS	BroB
Win	100	100	100	100
2-way	50	58	79	92
3-way	33	34	63	83
4-way	25	19	47	75
5-way	20	11	35	67
6-way	17	7	25	58
7-way	14	4	17	50
2nd	00	34	60	83
3rd	00	11	43	67
4th	00	4	27	50
5th	00	01	17	33
6th	00	00	4	00

*Though I know of no one who advocates rating in such a manner, some people suggest that the rulebook should be interpreted such that a win is worth 100 and all other outcomes, including draws, are worth 00.

The following is a Besh linear separator:

oOo

Beware it.

Through the kind offices of Nick Ulanov I was granted admission last Spring to a pres² screening of Monty Python and the Holy Grail before it was playing. There I was handed the following, purportedly biographies of Monty Python members. I will intersperse them in the magazine as necessary and appropriate. (Greg Costikyan has already printed them in GIGO, but few get that, and anyway, it was my idea first.)

GRAHAM CHAPMAN:

Before inventing a television character named David Frost ("We got the idea for the name," says Graham, "on a very cold day at Terry's flat.") Graham Chapman entertained himself while unemployed; the RAF while in Burma; and Malta-bound tour groups while on the MS Dalmatia. Between the RAF and the tour boat to Malta he sold synthetic fibre, which apparently was not entertaining.

After David Fros came across the Atlantic, diluting in the process, Graham and his chums from the cold flat (Terry Jones, John Cleese, and Michael Palin) set about creating a new character. Fortunately, they met Eric Idle who was casting for other parts in a just-written TV series, MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS. He instantly cast Graham as the fatuous Colonel; persuaded John Cleese to use his real life silly walk to become a famous star, and found some small parts of Michael and Terry.

Graham is the quiet one of the group. Married to Terry Gilliam, a dishy little American, he lives a retiring life near London's Hampstead, and is probably Jewish.

TERRY GILLIAM: For all his lovable American accent and tomboy good-humor, Terry is, at heart, a lovable American-speaking, good-humored tomboy, and not a dry rot and deinfestation operative as some people have claimed (see: MY SON THE DEINFESTATION OPERATIVE by Mrs. O. Gilliam, published by Faber and Faber 1961).

The above will be continued elsewhere wherever I find the space.

The following is material prepared by Edi Birsan, curator of the American end of the International Subscription Exchange, taken from #10 of his newsletter, U.S. Dollars.

DEPOSITS

12/12/75	Haas from Lorenz, Steve	\$17.40
11/14/75	Haas from Gross, Hyman	10.00
11/18/75	Haas from Sacks, Robert	10.00
11/21/75	Haas from Murison, George	15.00
11/21/75	Haas from Nathan Mitchell	5.00
11/30/75	Booth from Kelly, Ron	5.00
11/30/75	Haas from Kelly, RTon	5.00
11/30/75	Prevot from Kelly, Ron	3.00
11/30/75	Kelly, Ron	7.00
12/15/75	Birsan, Edi	6/00
		<u>\$83.40</u>

WITHDRAWALS

12/12/75	Haas to Gygax, Gary	\$208.83
12/15/75	Haas to Metagaming	6/00
		<u>\$214.83</u>

TRANSFERS

11/15/75	Swanson to Boyer, John	4.00
11/15/75	Swanson to Drews	2/00
11/15/75	Swanson to Berggren, P.	2.00
11/25/75	Berggren to Swanson	2.00
11/30/75	Rosenberg to Birsan	1/25

PREVIOUS BALANCE	\$438.54
Deposits	83.40
Withdrawals	214.83
NEW BALANCE	307.11

CURRENT BALANCES

Baker/PDT	1.00	ISE interest	3.24
Baker, John	1.00	Johnson, Dave	3.75
Berggren, Pete	0	Kelly, Ron	7.00
Birks, Pete	13.00	Lakofka, Len	2.00
Birsan, Edi	23.74	Leeder, John	5.00
Booth, Clive	10.00	Patterson, Hartley	2.00
Boyer, John	6.00	Piggott, John	3.00
Bullock, Mick	29.16	Prevot, Roland	5.00
Correll, Robert	5.00	Rosenberg, Scott	16.25
Drews, Harry	2.00	Swanson, Pete	7.45
Feron, Michel	1.00	Tihor, Stephen	10.00
Haas, Walter Luc	119.06	Walkerdine, Rich	27.46
Haven, Will	2.00	Warden, Greg	2.00
IDA	0		

FINANCIAL NEWS

(1) Gordon Anderson has still not come up with the tournament prize money for both Dipcons VIII and VII. No word is heard from EL CON which now seems to be more of a con every day.

(2) Len Lakofka's balance comes from a \$2 deposit from Doug Ronson. OK Len?

(3) Plans for the North American flyer for European and British 'zines are firming up. Presently scheduled is BUMM and Mad Policy. I hope to make an offset x flyer of about 1,000 and send it to various publishers for inclusion in their 'zines.

(4) Despite the flyer's being a good service, there has been no official word from the NGC on it.

1974FM (PA1)

GM: Diller

Dudland

Most of the people in this game missed moves. Next season we will go ahead, with or without moves. So get them in! We need ~~xx~~ a player for Austria--the position will go to the first taker. It's a good one, too.

PA2 (1975GH), PA5 (1973FC), and PA6 (1975B) WILL ALL RESUME PLAY. PLEASE GET YOUR ORDERS IN IF THEY'RE NOT IN ALREADY.

PA3 (1974GU)

GM: Rosenberg

Fall 1907

DILLER GETS A BUILD, TURKEY BEGINNING TO END

AUSTRIA (Bennett): A UKR-war; A RUM-sev; A VIE s a ser-BUD; a boh-SIL; A BUL-con;
A SYR s f aeg-SMY; A LON-yor; F NTH c french a bel-nwy.

ENGLAND (Fox): f den-HEL; A YOR ~~g~~ A CLY-lpl.

FRANCE (Malmquist): F EAS s austrian f aeg-smy; f ion-AEG; F ENG & A BUR s a pic-BEL;
F NRG s a bel-NWY; a nwy-FIN; a EDI-cly; F LPL-cly.

GERMANY (Diller): A GAL-war; f bal-SWE; A RUH s a mun; A MUN s a ruh; F HOL-nth.

TURKEY (Rosenzweig): A MOS s A STP; A SEV h; A ANK s & F CON ~~g~~ f smy; f smy ~~g~~
f con (-OTB).

SUPPLY CENTER TALLY:

AUSTRIA: bud, vie, tri, ser, gre, tun, vie, rum, lon, bul, SMY
ENGLAND: den, ~~del~~, ~~del~~
FRANCE: bre, par, mar, spa, por, bel, nap, rom, lpl, edi, NWY
GERMANY: ber, mun, kie, war, hol, SWE
TURKEY: con, ank, sev, mos, stp, ~~del~~

(11) Build 1
(1) remove two
(11) build 1
(6) build 1
(5) even

~~XXXX~~ WINTER 1907 and SPRING 1908 WILL BE COMBINED. PLEASE NOTE.

1974ID (PA4)

GM: Barlow

Fall 1904

REVISED ADJUDICATION (only slightly different)

AUSTRIA (Bennett): R A bul-gre. A gre-ALB; F ION-nap; A ven-ROM; a tri-VEN;
A bud-TRI; A BOH-mun; F con-AEG; F SMY ~~g~~ F con-aeg.

ENGLAND (Denhart): F BEL-hol; a hol-KIE; F DEN s a hol-kie; f lon-NTH; f kie-HEL.

FRANCE (Brennick): A BUR-ruh; A PIC-bur; A pie-TUS; a mar-PIE; F LYO-trn.

GERMANY (~~del~~): A ber-kie (-OTB); A MUN ~~g~~ a ber-kie; A RUH-hol.

ITALY (~~del~~): A ven h (NSU); F TRN-nap; A TUN h; F EAS-smy; A APU /h/.

RUSSIA (Malmquist): F bal-SWE; f nth-FDI; A PRU s a sil-BER; A BUL h; A ANK-ARM; f rum-BLA

CENTERS:

AUSTRIA: vic, bud, tri, gre, smy, ser, ~~del~~, ~~del~~, VEN, ROM.

ENGLAND: lpl, lon, den, bel, ~~del~~, KIE.

FRANCE: mar, par, bre, spa, por.

GERMANY: mun, hol, ~~del~~, ~~del~~.

ITALY: nap, tun, ~~del~~, ~~del~~.

RUSSIA: war, sev, stp, mos, rum, swe, nwy, ank, CON, BUL, FDI, BER.

(8) even
(5) even
(5) even
(2) even
(2) remove 2
(12) build 4

WINTER 1904:

ITALY removes A Tun, F Eas

Russia builds F Stp(nc), A Mos, A War. Owes one more.

PLEASE SEE NOTES ABOUT THIS GAME ON NEXT PAGE!!!

NOTES FOR 1974ID: Scott Bennet's Address is 147-37 38th Ave, Flushing NY 11354.
Russell Fox is resigning as Germany; we have orders from him for next season. After that, position will go into civil disorder.
A six-way draw has been proposed. Please vote with it on your next moves.
The only change in this adjudication is Malmquist's orders; he had sent it but Dave misplaced it.

1974AGcv (PAI)

GM: Diller

Winter 1905

AUSTRIA (Civil Disorder): Remove dislodged A Vie
CHINA (Costikyan): NBR. Owed three. Address: 1675 York Ave, NY NY ~~100~~ 10028.
ENGLAND (Dave Barlow): NBR. Owed one.
FRANCE (Gruen): Even. Standby: Edi Birsan, 35-35 75th St, Apt 302, Jackson Heights NY
INDIA (Prosnitz): Build F Mad 11372
ITALY (Honig): Build F Rom, a nap, F Mog
RUSSIA (Eisen): Build F StP (nc), A Oms
TURKEY (c.d.): Retreat A Gre-OTB. This position is now dead.

And now, to finish up that Terry Gilliam Biography:

Terry has never been specifically interested in the structural renovation of building fabrics nor has he ever become President of the United States of America, as other people have claimed (see: MY SON WAS A DEINFESTATION OPERATIVE by Mr. O. Gilliam published by McMillan 1962). As far as politics are concerned, his record is spotless --he has never gone in for them at all.

Terry looks forward to a future with some major companies including I.T.T., but it is quite likely he won't get one. His hair is still long, and his legs are only bandy if you look at them in a certain way.

See you in three weeks.

THE POCKET ARMENIAN
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